

Cancel claims 1-25.

Amend claims 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 as follows:

1 ~~26.~~ (Amended) In combination, an instrument and a gripping device for aiding in the gripping of said instrument, said instrument having a barrel portion and an operating portion extending from an end of the instrument opposite said barrel portion for performing an operation, said gripping device being an integral part of said instrument positioned between said barrel portion and said operating portion, and comprising:

first and second ends of said gripping device respectively adjacent to said barrel portions and said operating portion;

a body of said gripping device between said first and second ends having a shelf extending radially outward from [the] an opening in said [first] second end, a surface area of one surface of said shelf being of a size sufficient to engage a portion of any finger of a hand holding said device;

Q said surface being aligned transverse to a longitudinal axis of said instrument;

said body having a substantially annular-shaped surface opposite said shelf which gradually reduces in diameter from said first end toward an intermediate portion between said first and second ends and which gradually increases in diameter from said intermediate portion toward said second end to form an intermediate region of reduced diameter which is of a size sufficient to receive portions of any finger of the gripping hand whereby a force for urging said operating portion against an engaging surface is applied to said shelf in a direction substantially parallel to said longitudinal axis and is significantly greater than forces required to hold said device and which are applied in a direction substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal axis.

2 ~~27~~. (Amended) In combination, an instrument and an integral gripping device for aiding in the gripping of the instrument, said instrument having a barrel portion [held by a barrel portion] and an operating portion extending from an end of the instrument opposite said barrel portion for performing an operation, said gripping device being an integral part of said instrument positioned between said barrel portion and said operating portion, and comprising:

first and second ends of said gripping device respectively adjacent said barrel portion and said operating portion;

a body of said gripping device between said first and second ends having a generally annular shape and [curving radially outwardly and then downwardly] tapering radially inwardly in moving from said [second] first end [to] toward said [first] second end [and generally tapering inwardly at] to a portion of said [one-piece body] gripping device intermediate said first and second ends and gradually curving outwardly from said intermediate portion toward said second end;

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A said gripping device having a finger engaging surface extending [from] between said intermediate portion and said second end [toward said first end], said finger engaging surface being initially aligned generally parallel to a longitudinal axis of said instrument and gradually curving outwardly [along a lower portion thereof adjacent said first end] and terminating in [an] a curved edge which joins a curved convex surface which forms said [first] second end and extends radially inwardly toward [the] an opening in said [first] second end through which said operating portion extends;

said [lower] outwardly curved portion of said finger engaging surface having a curved convex shape defining a force applying shelf diagonally aligned with the longitudinal axis, said finger engaging surface having a contour confirming to a finger of a gripping hand for resting [a] said finger [of a gripping hand] thereon [and], said force applying shelf [portion] provided to urge said operating portion toward engagement with [the] a surface by application of a force to said force applying shelf [portion] by any one of a tip, lateral surface, dorsal surface or knuckle of [a] the finger applied thereto;

said [gradually tapering] intermediate portion of said body forming a D-shaped perimeter with the portion of the finger engaging surface parallel to the longitudinal axis and being of a size and contour sufficient to be engaged by at least another finger of [a] the gripping hand which, by engaging said [tapered] intermediate portion is capable of supporting the [device] instrument with only a [minimum] minimal force exerted upon said [device] instrument in a direction perpendicular to said longitudinal axis whereas the force acting on said force applying shelf and applied in a direction generally parallel to said longitudinal axis is significantly greater than the force supporting said device.

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28. (Amended) In combination, an instrument and an integral gripping device for aiding in the gripping of said instrument, said instrument having a barrel portion and an operating portion extending from an end of the instrument opposite said barrel portion for performing an operation, said gripping device being an integral part of said instrument positioned between said barrel portion and said operating portion, and comprising:

a
first and second ends of said gripping device respectively adjacent said barrel portion and said operating portion;

a body of said gripping device between said first and second ends having a truncated annular-shaped periphery defining a cross-section having a substantially D-shaped perimeter at said first end, a flat surface portion of the truncated periphery defining a linear portion of said D-shaped perimeter;

said body having an annular periphery at said second end;

said flat surface portion defining a gripping surface which is substantially flat over a portion of its length between said first end and said second end and which curves gradually over the remainder of its length to provide a curved convex surface portion;

the annular-shaped periphery of said [one-piece] body gradually tapering inwardly from said first end toward an intermediate portion and thereafter tapering outwards toward said second end to define a substantially hour glass shape.

~~4~~ 29. (Amended) The combination according to claim ~~28~~³, wherein an intermediate section of said flat portion of said gripping surface is substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of said [bore] barrel portion.

~~5~~ 30. (Amended) The combination according to claim ~~29~~⁴, wherein the curved convex surface [area] portion curves away from said longitudinal axis.

~~6~~ 31. (Amended) The combination according to claim ~~28~~³, wherein said gripping surface has a width measured transverse to said longitudinal axis which increases from said first end to said [second end] intermediate portion.

~~7~~ 32. (Amended) The combination according to claim ~~28~~³, wherein a free end of said [second end surrounding the opening therein] barrel portion has a substantially hemispheric shape.

~~9~~ 34. (Amended) The combination according to claim ~~28~~³, wherein a radial distance from a longitudinal axis of said barrel portion of a perimeter of said annular periphery at said second end is at least equal to a radial distance of a curved portion of said D-shaped perimeter.

~~10~~ 35. (Amended) In combination, an instrument and an integral gripping device for aiding in the gripping of said instrument, said instrument having a barrel portion and an operating portion at an end of the instrument opposite said barrel portion for performing an operation, said gripping device comprising:

first and second ends of said gripping device respectively adjacent to said barrel portion and said operating portion;

a body of said gripping device between said first and second ends having a generally hour-glass shape on two opposing [sides] side surfaces, one of said two opposing [sides] side surfaces extending radially outwardly [being expanded] at said

(Claim 35 Amended - Continued)

[first] second end by an amount greater than the remaining one of said two opposing sides to form [said] a support shelf for supporting a portion of a single finger;

two remaining sides of said gripping device between said two opposing sides having generally linear surfaces extending in a longitudinal direction and having a convex surface when viewed in cross-section; and

said two remaining sides and a remaining one of the opposing sides having a generally hour-glass shape serving as single or plural finger support [surfaces] surface.

36. ¹¹ (Amended) A combination according to claim ~~35~~¹⁰ wherein said instrument [is] being a writing instrument having an elongated tubular-shaped supply member arranged in said instrument and aligned at one end with said operating portion, which comprises a writing point, said tubular member being aligned so that its longitudinal axis is displaced from [central] a central longitudinal axis of said barrel portion.

37. ¹² (Amended) In combination, an instrument and an integral gripping device for aiding in the gripping of said instrument, said instrument having a barrel portion and an operating portion at an end of the instrument opposite said barrel portion for performing an operation, said gripping device comprising:

first and second ends of said gripping device respectively adjacent to said barrel portion and said operating portion;

a body of said gripping device between said first and second ends having a generally hour-glass shape on two opposing side surfaces, one of said two opposing side surfaces extending radially outwardly at said second end by an amount greater than the remaining one of said two opposing sides to form a support shelf for supporting a portion of a single finger;

(Claim 37 Amended - Continued)

two remaining sides of said gripping device between said two opposing sides having generally linear surfaces extending in a longitudinal direction and having a convex surface when viewed in cross-section;

said two remaining sides and a remaining one of the opposing sides having a generally hour-glass shape serving as single or plural finger support surface;

said instrument being a writing instrument having an elongated tubular-shaped supply member arranged in said instrument and aligned at one end with said operating portion, which comprises a writing point, said tubular member being aligned so that its longitudinal axis is displaced from a central longitudinal axis of said barrel portion; and

[A combination according to claim 36 wherein] said writing point [is] being displaced from said support shelf so as to be positioned so that the longitudinal central axis of the instrument lies between said shelf and the longitudinal central axis of the tubular-shaped supply member.

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38. (Amended) In combination, an instrument and an integral gripping device for aiding in the gripping of said instrument, said instrument having a barrel portion and an operating portion at an end of the instrument opposite said barrel portion for performing an operation, said gripping device comprising:

first and second ends of said gripping device respectively adjacent to said barrel portion and said operating portion;

a body of said gripping device between said first and second ends having a generally hour-glass shape on two opposing side surfaces, one of said two opposing side surfaces extending radially outwardly at said second end by an amount greater than the remaining one of said two opposing sides to form a support shelf for supporting a portion of a single finger;

(Claim 38 Amended - Continued)

two remaining sides of said gripping device between said two opposing sides having generally linear surfaces extending in a longitudinal direction and having a convex surface when viewed in cross-section;

said two remaining sides and a remaining one of the opposing sides having a generally hour-glass shape serving as single or plural finger support surface;
and

92 [The combination according to claim 36 further comprising] a closing cap for sealing an open end of said barrel portion, said cap having an internal annular recess for receiving and properly positioning an end of said tubular member regardless of an angular orientation of said cap relative to said barrel portion.

L Add new claims ~~39~~¹⁴ and ~~40~~¹⁰, as follows:

~~39.~~¹⁴ The combination according to claim ~~36~~¹⁰, wherein said instrument is a writing instrument having a supply tube extending through said barrel portion and gripping device and terminating at a writing point extending from said operating portion.

53 ~~40.~~¹⁵ The combination according to claim ~~39~~¹³, wherein said supply tube is parallel to and displaced from a central axis of said instrument.